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ABSTRACT

Despite all the optimistic discussions of a rural renaissance and a significant population turnaround favoring growth in rural communities, rural areas are still experiencing a lack of essential services in virtually every area important to quality of life for rural residents. Included among the areas in which a need for improved rural support services are needed are the following: adequate health care, water and other sanitary systems, child care, transportation, communications, energy, housing facilities, and capacity building. In the past, rural communities have been grossly discriminated against in federal government funding policies. The recent migration to rural areas has created an urgent need for improved rural support services. To fill this need and help rural communities realize their full potential, three priorities must be addressed by all levels of government. These priorities are (1) helping rural communities make maximum use of existing financial, material, and human resources; (2) helping rural areas truly gain equitable funding allocations for support services and other kinds of development; and (3) helping develop more flexible programming initiatives and allocation mechanisms that are genuinely responsive to individual community determinations of need. (Related reports on rural development in America are available through ERIC--see note.) (MN)

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ENHANCING TRADITIONAL AND INNOVATIVE RURAL SUPPORT SERVICES

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For all the optimistic discussions of a rural renaissance and a significant population turnaround favoring growth in rural communities, the status of support services development in rural areas remains grim:

--An estimated 20 million rural residents are utilizing water systems which fall below the minimum safety standards set by the Public Health Service; (21.8)
--Over one-third of all rural residents are living in areas officially designated as medically underserved; (22.3)
--The Department of Transportation has categorized virtually half the local roads in rural America as being in "intolerable" condition; (21.2)
--A far greater proportion of rural occupied housing units are substandard than those in urban areas (3.0).

The lack of essential services includes virtually every factor important to quality of life for rural residents: adequate health care, water and other sanitary systems, child care, transportation, communications, energy, and housing facilities. Even more sobering, perhaps, than all these "have nots" is the absence in many cases of the necessary "capacity building" mechanisms which would make it possible for residents in rural areas to develop and/or locate the resources--financial and political--in order to obtain such support services, either through successful competition for existing program funds or through political lobbying strategies that would help generate needed financial assistance at a State or Federal level. Because of the tremendous cost of many of these support service systems, the rural ideal of local "free enterprise" too often becomes synonymous with "no enterprise," because the local financing is simply not there or debt limits are so low that communities cannot possibly plan and carry out support service development.

The case of Broadalbin, New York, and its efforts to improve its local facilities points clearly to the magnitude of the problem:

> Fearing the danger of fire to the village (after a sawdust plant fire burned out of control for 3 days with only creek water "teeming with raw sewage" to extinguish the blaze), village leaders in 1976 began a massive campaign to locate the $300,000 needed to revamp the village's deteriorating

water system. Local funds were out of the question since the State's debt ceiling for the village was only $300,000 and the community was already $50,000 in debt. Over the past 10 years, $62,000 had already been spent by the village for unsuccessful grant applications. Two HUD applications were submitted, but were unsuccessful due to lack of adequate funds. An EPA loan program which could have been helpful had been discontinued several months earlier, supposedly because funds were available elsewhere for this kind of program. Net result: the village was cited by the State Health Department and people had to begin boiling water. Yet, because bills were too low under the "size of water bill" funding criteria, the village did not qualify for FmHA grants for water system improvement assistance. The community's major industry--a furniture company employing 100 people--was threatening to curtail any further expansion because of the lack of adequate water. The community could not even supply one plant in the village with enough water to have running water or indoor toilets for employees. (21.4)

As the Broadalbin case illustrates, lack of adequate support services not only is a serious threat to quality of life and health in rural communities, but also presents a sometimes formidable, if not insurmountable barrier to any kind of local initiative to stimulate industrial or economic development to improve the economic base of the community and the income of individuals and families in the area. So the vicious cycle exists: lack of adequate community financial and political resources impede support service development, while the resulting barriers to potential economic growth keep the community and its citizens locked in levels of services and income far below that of their urban counterparts.

The myths which contribute to this cycle of inadequate rural service development are legion, among them the stereotype of the healthy rural farmer, living close to the land in an idyllic environmental setting. (21.8) In reality, the demographics of rural life are far more complicated than this. There are rural communities in which logging or recreation are prevalent (so-called "undulating" communities which have chronic broad swings in seasonal unemployment), and those with modest industrial bases. Only half of those actually living on farms in the United States are employed mainly or solely in agriculture at all. (13.0) The majority of small famers need some form of second income or employment in order to survive. One rural study maintains that, "as a group, families living on small farms...derive more than 80 percent of their income from non-farm sources." (11.0) The median family income for nonmetro families was only 80.4 percent of that

for metro families in 1973. (21.2) Over 20 percent of all nonmetropolitan residents were living in poverty in 1977 compared to 11 percent of all metropolitan families. (22.3) Recent studies also have indicated that a wide gap exists between individual income in rural areas and that of the population as a whole, even if the family income gap is closing somewhat. In some rural areas, infant mortality rates are 70 percent higher than the national average. (22.3) A non-metro resident is 40 percent more likely never to have received any kind of preventative health care services such as chest x-rays or pap smears. (21.8) Occupation-related injuries and illnesses are higher among rural residents (particularly miners, farmers, loggers) than among their urban counterparts. (22.3) The unadjusted death rate for the rural state of Maine is the highest in the country and death rates for heart disease, strokes, cancer, lung disease, and cirrhosis are all higher than for the nation as a whole. (22.4)

In a longitudinal study (1960-1974) of 13 small rural communities in New York State, rural sociologists outlined a number of significant trends in social services gain and loss in recent years. Gains generally outnumbered losses in "social, recreational, professional, health, and welfare services." However, overall losses were reported in availability of economic services (eg. retail facilities) and communication and transportation services (eg. newspapers, freight, rail service). Overall, of 85 possible types of services considered--ranging from child care, motion picture theaters and specific retail establishments to fire service--only 17 were found at all in all 13 communities in 1974. Three communities had gained more services overall since 1960; 3 reported no change; but 7 lost more services than they had gained. (13.0) In short, rural areas often are finding themselves more isolated than ever from certain key services and find that costs of access to others is impacting on overall buying power and quality of life.

The statistics point to a bleak pattern, not only in Broadalbin or Maine, but in rural communities across the country. Costs for needed rural services are staggering in many cases and the reality of poverty with which to meet these

problems is equally staggering.

A Question of Equity: Support Service Development Policies in Rural Compared to Urban Areas

The widespread lack of certain essential support services in many rural communities is not a problem which developed overnight and the roots of the problem are often highly complex. One major factor is obvious, however: rural communities have been grossly discriminated against in Federal government funding policies. Whereas approximately 34 percent (85 million) of all Americans live in rural settings, here are just a few of the kinds of funding allocation levels that have been set for recent rural programming:

--In FY 1974, only 22 percent of Federal aid to state and local public agencies went to non-metropolitan areas. Only 19 percent of the Federal elementary and secondary education funds and 12 percent of the Federal vocational education funds went to rural areas in the same year. (5.0)
--In FY 1975, rural areas received only 11.7 percent of CETA employment and training dollars and only 4.9 percent of summer youth corps funds. (21.2)
--Also in FY 1975, less than 10 percent of FHA and VA insured housing loans and 12.6 percent of all defense contracts were awarded in rural areas. (21.2)

With at least one-third of this country's population living in rural communities, it is clear from such statistics that Federal allocation levels have been consistently unfairly low for rural areas...in everything from housing to education and training...based on sheer population equity.

The inequity between urban and rural funding allocations becomes even more dramatic when the whole issue of relative poverty levels and diseconomy of scale enters into the picture. Whereas approximately a third of the population of the United States lives in rural areas, an estimated 52 percent of the nation's poor live in such non-metropolitan communities. (27.2, 19.0.) Estimates are known to be higher than so-called official statistics, mainly because studies have shown that many rural poor or unemployed simply do not show up on official unemployment rolls. (9.0) Moreover, due to higher transportation costs in order to obtain many services and because of the relatively high cost of many kinds

of services such as water systems in proportion to the budget as a whole for a community in a rural as compared to an urban setting, rural residents--including the disproportionately high number of the poor in such communities--are actually compelled to pay more for many kinds of services than their urban counterparts. Simply put, low rural Federal funding allocations totally ignore that it costs more not less to develop rural support service programs and systems than in urban communities.

The Rural Development Act of 1972 was intended in part to overcome some of these problems in funding equity, but in fact the program was never funded at recommended levels from 1972-1977. (21.3) The state of Minnesota alone has a backlog of 660 unfunded applications for RDA monies. (21.1) As inflation takes more and more of a toll on the dollars available for community development, rural areas are falling farther and farther behind their urban counterparts in the ability to fund support service programs.

In addition to gross funding inadequacies and inequities, rural areas frequently find that the structure of Federal regulations itself contributes to the problem of rural resource development. For example, project ranking criteria for HUD programs, which make it possible for many urban areas to upgrade their water systems, streets, and other community utilities and facilities, tend to prevent rural areas from making effective use of the funds for such services. Moreover, whereas HUD--with its urban bias--funds 75 to 100 percent of a given project, Rural Development Act regulations limit grants to 50 percent of the project cost. This discrepancy in matching policies grossly discriminates against rural communities which can even less afford a match at all than their urban counterparts, particularly because of debt limits in many states and because of the extremely high cost of most infrastructure projects in relationship to a rural community's tax resources. The Administrative Guidelines for the RDA program in 1975-1976 actually resulted in only 25-29 percent average grant funding levels for rural development programs, meaning that the matching formula inequities

in practice tended to be even worse than in theory. (21.1)

Other rural experts have expressed growing concern that there seems to be a tendency to further "gut" those few genuinely rural fund sources for use in urban communities. In recent years, EDA (which was traditionally oriented toward rural counties in its development programming) has been expressing greater interest in a more urban orientation. (21.1) Similarly, in the area of transportation which is already so seriously underdeveloped in rural communities, some government officials are proposing diverting Highway Trust funds--one of the major sources of monies for rural road building and improvement--to development of urban mass transit systems. (21.7)

Underlying such wholesale lack of priority on rural needs are a number of factors. First, there tends to be an unfortunate tendency on the part of many agencies and government leaders to allocate funds and develop programs where the "wheel squeeks the loudest" or where the most votes are concentrated. Rural areas may have higher poverty levels and higher costs in program development than their urban counterparts, but because of the traditional fact of rural isolation and related problems in rural coalition building, rural Americans have not been able to make their voices heard in order to secure the kind of equitable treatment (both in programs and in funding) to meet their local problems and needs. Second, because rural communities are so diverse in terms of demographics, it is not as easy to develop standardized program criteria and funding patterns based on population, unemployment, or other "objective" measurable factors in rural areas. By comparison, inner city metropolitan programming is relatively more homogenious. Hence, as with the issue of rural versus urban transportation funds and programs, there is often a tendency to give up on the more complex rural issues and focus in on the more manageable, "big-population-bang-for-the-buck" urban mass transit programs.

Third, the lack of coordination among Federal agencies and the piecework approach to everything from health to transportation programming tends to mean that rural areas will ultimately be left out. Fearing the maintenance of effort syndrome,

government agencies have a tendency to attempt to shove old programs off onto other agencies in order to fund new projects and priorities. As a result, many programs simply fall by the wayside after a brief period of funding. Since many types of program development and changes actually take longer to implement in rural communities than in urban America, due to the more tradition-oriented leadership and social patterns, emphasis on quick return or high turnover of program priorities does not take into account the needs and dynamics of the rural communities. The 18-month client cutoff in CETA manpower training programs, for example, ignores the fact that many rural workers in old industrial states such as Michigan who are in need of retraining already have certain short-term training skills such as welding. The kind of help that is needed includes more complex training programs for skills which cannot realistically be completed within 18 months, combined with a sustained economic development effort in the community as a whole to absorb the workers being retrained. In short, the kind of training options open under such guidelines in rural communities is insensitive to both the individual's needs and the long-term growth potential of the community as a whole.

Finally, the whole question of how demographics are impacting on urban-rural discrimination needs to be reassessed. In the area of unemployment, for example, both experts in state unemployment commissions and rural demographers have maintained consistently that rural unemployment figures are woefully inaccurate as a measure for any kind of realistic funding allocation system. In Gadsden, Florida, for example, a comparative field survey showed that actual unemployment in that rural community was more than twice as large as the official rate (20.2 percent as opposed to 9.2 percent). Because so much work in rural areas is either seasonal or parttime, many workers are simply not eligible for benefits. Such rural unemployment also tends to be more chronic than that in urban settings. Figures further demonstrate that for those rural people who <u>are</u> eligible for benefits, the problems of transportation or lack of awareness of services tend to keep people from

actually taking advantage of employment programs to which they are entitled. At least 5 percent more eligible Southern urban unemployed actually received compensation than their eligible rural counterparts. (9.0) As a result, not only do rural people have less chance of obtaining employment service benefits, but their chances of taking part in Federal manpower/training programs may also be unjustly limited because of the gross inadequacy of unemployment reporting procedures in their regions.

The statistics and evidence pointing to gross discrimination against rural Americans in government programming are so overwhelming, it seems impossible that the pattern can continue unchecked year after year. It is vital that rural areas finally learn how to build the kind of national political coalitions that take into account both the diversity and commonality of their interests, in order to make Federal agencies more aware of the kind of mandates that are needed in order to meet rural needs. In turn, the Federal government should realize that it cannot and need not wait for such overt lobbying to help rural Americans identify and find solutions to their most pressing service and development problems. Particularly at a point where massive budget cutting seems imminent across the board, it is essential that the whole issue of rural-urban inequity needs to be addressed at a national level.

The Urban-Rural Population "Turnaround" as it Impacts on Rural Support Service Needs

Underlying some of the current urgency of concern for rural support service needs is the whole issue of why, beginning in about 1970, the decade-long migration of rural population to urban areas has been replaced by a significant flow in the opposite direction in many parts of the country and what impact this trend is having on rural life. In the United States from 1970-1975, metropolitan areas grew only .7 percent as compared to a 1.2 percent growth rate for nonmetropolitan areas (a trend, by the way, which has been observed in European industrialized countries

such as West Germany as well during the same period). Some of this change has been attributed to an influx of retirees and vacationers into rural areas, not just in the Southwest and Southeast where climate is perhaps a major factor, but in Northern Great Lakes and New England areas as well. Growth is also especially significant in Montana and Appalachian coal field counties. Except for a few areas in Iowa, Indiana, and Kansas, the Great Plains and Corn Belt areas have not been experiencing this kind of growth and, in general, prime commercial farm areas are still experiencing some outmigration. (18.0)

A second factor seems to be a widespread preference for small town life among the population as a whole combined with more income beyond a subsistence level in urban areas that could be encouraging people to risk a move to a more preferred environment. In a nationwide survey, 75 percent of those responding stated that they would prefer to live in a town of less than 50,000, provided that a city larger than that size were within 30 minutes commuting distance. (4.0) Although income differential between urban and rural areas continues to be about 20 percent, short range economic losses do not seem to be particularly important to urbanites making the move to rural areas as long as lower overall costs would seem long term to offset any initial income loss. (18.0) Given higher transportation and other costs, especially as the migrants approach retirement and are less able to fend for themselves without some kind of assistance, this promise of lower living costs combined with easy access to recreational amenties might be a fallacy. In any case, a recent study by the Michigan State University Ag Experiment Station indicates that crime, environmental quality, setting to raise children, quality of health care and schools are all higher considerations than cost of living among those preferring the rural setting. (10.0)

In some ways, rural America is becoming a residential and recreational haven for urbanities who still continue to look to larger nearby communities for retail services and other amenities of life. Further statistics seem to indicate that this urban to rural in-migration is particularly strong among those in lower

income, less educated, older age brackets, while a drain of more highly educated, younger, white-collar rural youth out of the nonmetropolitan areas is still continuing to some extent. (12.0)

Some sociologists postulate that, in part, this rural in-migration is influenced by the fact that there has been some significant improvement in rural support services in recent years (particularly in housing) which makes rural living more appealing. (18.0) Potentially, the relatively higher service expectations of the urban migrants could lead to demands for even further, more rapid improvements in services in the rural community. However, the advocacy of additional services by the urban newcomers may create a whole set of new problems. The urbanites high expectations and demand for rapid change is at odds with the traditional rural emphasis on stability and self-sufficienc,...which could represent a threat to the existing social and political dynamics of life in the rural community. Moreover, the relatively older age level of the urban in-migrants suggests that there will soon be an even greater drain on the already inadequate services in many communities, with little hope of radically higher tax incomes to increase available services. The resulting tensions could lead to a social, political, and economic factionalism in rural communities which could actually impede rather than stimulate any kind of joint community agendas for action. (18.0)

Land use and the increased demands on low-cost housing and water/sanitation facilities are only some of the problems associated with the in-migration trend. On Long Island, New York, for example, Suffolk County is emeshed in a tremendous controvery over the status of farmland usage and potential housing development demands. Over 60 percent of prime potato farming land is already owned by non-farmers at this point. While farmland prices are theoretically set at approximately $1,500 per acre, their value for development purposes is set at approximately $7,500 per acre. In 1980, taxpayers voted to appropriate monies to purchase development rights to farmland as a means of stemming this loss of prime agricultural land, but to date such methods have had limited results. The financial burden of

preserving the rural environment is also falling hard on some local taxpayers. Meanwhile, proposed beachfront development projects threaten the environment with pollution and loss of habitat for wildlife and fish. (13.0) Development projects in some areas of the southwestern and western United States present ongoing threats to groundwater supplies as well as air quality in fragile dessert environments and recreational areas. As taxes and land values are driven upward by the influx of newcomers, traditional rural residents may find themselves unable to maintain a viable existence in these rural communities--particularly older residents and those already living at or below the poverty level. But to attack such land use issues as of universal importance in all rural communities is to ignore the fact that in some rural areas in Texas and elsewhere, there is sufficient acreage available to accomodate a great deal of residential and/or industrial growth. (1.10)

In some areas of the western United States, in-migration which could come in massive numbers over the next decade as part of efforts to develop national energy self-sufficiency could totally overwhelm both the ecology of the area and the resources available to accomodate such a tremendous population explosion. Population growth related to the development of the Overthrust Belt oil and gas deposits/could create the need for more than $200 million in housing, $15.1 million in public facilities, $36.4 million in roads in the cities alone in addition to $700,000 per mile for a yet undetermined number of new highways, and $1.25 million for new sewer and water treatment facilities to serve the 1,000 permanent and 2,000 temporary employees and their families migrating into the area. The proposed 36 synthetic fuels plants in the region would bring in 850,000 more people and would necessitate community development costs of $11 billion. The MX Missile project in this western desert region would bring in still more population and growth in the uranium industry could lead to an influx as high as 136,000 people. A conservative estimate of population growth in the west related to energy development alone has been set at 1,082,176 people. As one

western Governor outlined it, this would mean 100 new high schools, hire 30,000 new police and firemen, treat 216 million gallons of additional water per day and 1,080,000 additional gallons of sewage per day, develop 26,000 hospital beds, and hire 11,000 medical personnel... all of this by 1990! The positive side of all of this is the tremendous amount of new energy and fuel resources as well as the 182,000 new jobs which will be developed. The negative side is the frighteningly destructive impact this growth could have in terms of the demands put on the environment of these states: particularly on the already rapidly shrinking water tables in the area. Currently, members of WESTPO (the Western Governors' Policy Office) are attempting to outline regional strategies for dealing with this projected population influx (issues which will be explored in greater depth later in this chapter as part of a discussion of rural water and energy problems). (26.3)

In short, the urban-rural migration turnaround represents oppotunities for a new kind of "rural renaissance" after so many years of rural outmigration, but with this potential for positive growth comes tremendous problems in the area of community resource allocation and support service development. The sections which follow go into greater detail on some of the specific key areas of inadequate support services in rural areas, including:

--rural health care needs;
--transportation and communication problems;
--housing needs;
--energy, water, and sanitary facility needs;
--child care services;
--access to retailing and recreational facilities.

Health and Medical Services in Rural Communities

> ..."Delivering health care services is particularly difficult where population is sparse and towns are far apart. Experts in rural health have indicated that low population density creates special problems since the critical mass of people in an area is often far less than that usually required for service resources or facilities. This applies, of course, to housing, sanitation, and transportation as well as to health care." (22.4)

At least one in three rural residents (about 35 million people) in this country are living in an area designated officially as "medically underserved." This includes

approximately 1,500 of the 3,000 counties and about 5,500 subcounty areas. In addition, there are underserved rural "pockets" located in areas otherwise described as well served. (21.8, 22.3)

The lack of services includes the whole range of essential health care programs:

--An inadequate number of "primary" health care physicians are based in rural areas. (Rural counties average less than 60 doctors per 100,000 people as compared to 200 per 100,000 in large cities. In the category of primary health care, urban areas have about 3 times the number of physicians as rural areas. Twenty-three counties in Texas have no physicians at all and 49 are critical shortage areas. Over 55 percent of Maine's primary health care needs are not being met.) (21.2, 22.3)

--Secondary health services such as mental health clinics, labs, and hospitals simply often do not exist at all in rural areas. (22.3)

--Dental care tends to be inaccessible in many rural areas. Maine, for example, has 37 dentists per 1,000 population compared to 48 per 1,000 for the country as a whole. (22.4)

--Health care assistance payment policies and unsupportive State legislation have tended to impede development of middle level professional health care programs that could alleviate the shortage of physicians in rural areas.

--Preventative health care programs, which could do so much toward improving infant mortality rates, in particular, as well as other basic health care problems in rural communities, are relatively rare (or as in the case of the immunization clinic programs of the Michigan Department of Health, are collapsing due to inadequate funding).

--Health care insurance programs which could help stimulate rural residents to seek better preventative health care are often not available to many rural workers because the parttime nature of their employment in recreational or similar seasonal industries excludes them from such benefits or because they are self-employed in farming. Deductions existing under affordable non-group plans would tend to make health care prohibitive on a day-to-day preventative care basis. The resulting tendency to seek care only in emergency life-and-death situations would tend to explain the higher death rate in rural states such as Maine.

--The lack of supportive services such as adequate sanitary and water facilities and adequate public transportation systems contribute significantly to the health care problems of rural residents and to their ability to access health care services.

--Finally, more consideration needs to be given to stimulating initiatives which would lead to the generation of local rural health problem research.

The root of many of these problems is, quite often, highly complex. Take the issue of manpower shortages in primary health care fields, for example. In the past, primary health care in rural areas tended to be provided by physicians in

solo practices...individuals committed to the very personalized kind of care compatible with the expectations and values of the local rural residents. Rural physicians involved in such health care delivery faced both lower incomes (an average of 60 percent of those enjoyed by urban colleagues) and the professional isolation associated with life in small, remote communities. (21.3) Continuing professional development was difficult (five states--four of them highly rural--including Maine, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, and Deleware do not even have medical schools). (22.6) The number of such traditional rural physicians remains inadequate to meet the needs ot the rural population and to further exacerbate the problem, many such rural doctors in primary health care are rapidly approaching retirement age. In Maine, for example, the age of primary health care physicians is 52, five years older than the national average. (22.6)

The low salaries of rural doctors compared to their urban equivalents, the professional and social isolation of the rural physician, the tendency toward solo practices in rural communities and the heavy workload that goes with it, the absence of hospitals and other medical support services, and the lack of medical schools in some rural states all contribute to the problem of how to reduce existing health care shortages effectively. In a survey of medical school graduates in Illinois over an 8-year period, young doctors cited the following factors as being most influential in where they chose to practice:

General Economic Conditions of the Area	77% Cited as Important
Cultural, Social Opportunities	72
Educational Opportunities for Children	68
Affiliation with a Hospital	63
Preference of a Spouse	50
Postgraduate Training Opportunities	46
Opportunity to Practice with Other Doctors	38
Born in the Area	37

Virtually every criteria listed, except the final one ("Born in the Area") would make rural areas less competitive in attracting a physician to the community. Above all, based on these criteria, there looms the reality of rural poverty and the income a doctor can expect to earn: of the approximately 34 percent of the population (85 million people) living in poverty in the United States, as high as

52 percent have been estimated to live in rural areas. (22.5)

In order to give physicians incentives to practice in rural communities, various Federal health care programs have tied compulsory service in rural shortage areas into loans to medical students and into grants to medical schools. The 1976 Health Care Professions Educational Assistance Act requires participating medical schools to have at least 50 percent of residency positions in primary care and scholarships under the Act oblige recipients to a minimum of 2 years practice in a health manpower shortage area. However, these efforts have not been entirely successful. Under National Health Service Corps programs, approximately 850 people were placed in 791 sites by 1977, but many rural people distrust physicians recruited through these Federal programs out of the fear that they are only practicing there reluctantly and will be gone in a few years. (22.3, 21.8) These results are similar to the problems with the Taos County (New Mexico) Cooperative Health Association experiment of the 1940s, which ran into the value conflicts of local residents, particularly Spanish-speaking clients, who felt either that they were being condescended to by the physicians in the program or that the kind of group care being offered was somehow inferior to the more personal, stable care offered by the traditional solo practitioner doctors of the past. (14.0)

As a result of these recruitment problems, some state medical recruitment organizations such as the Michigan Health Council and postsecondary institutions like Gannon College in Erie, Pennsylvania, have begun experimenting with programs that attempt to identify potential medical school students from the rural communities themselves with the hope that these young people will feel more compelled to return to and remain in a rural community once they begin practice. This approach would seem more realistic in light of the student survey which showed that at least 37 percent of all medical graduates considered their place of birth as a major criteria for choosing where to practice. Under the Gannon model, for example, students can enroll in a one-year pre-med curriculum, at the end of which the most promising students have the option of continuing at Gannon with 2 additional years

of such training. After the end of 3 years, these pre-med students then transfer to Hahnaman Medical Center, an independent medical school in Philadelphia for 3 more years, after which successful students are awarded both their MD and Bachelor of Science degrees. Graduates then are expected to return to Erie or other small towns in Pennsylvania to compete their residency in family medicine. The entire process of formal training prior to residency was completed in 6 years, as opposed to the more usual eight. Certainly, the attempt to recruit urban physicians to rural areas dare not be abandoned in light of the tremendous need, but there would seem to be a need as well to help rural young people find the financial resources (the Gannon model, for example, is supported by a private foundation) to attend medical school in greater numbers and to help these students overcome the educational barriers which may result from less rigorous high school training than some of the urban peers with whom they are competing for medical school admission.

Because of the stereotypes many rural youth have regarding health careers, it is important at a high school level and younger to help stimulate innovative programming that helps these young people see health fields as achievable, rewarding occupations that would enable them to remain in their rural communities. One interesting possible informal recruitment model is the Educational Action Team program developed by the Eugene, Oregon, schools with the assistance of Professor Kenneth Polk, Sociologist from the University of Oregon. High school students are employed 3-10 hours a week, at the same time earning academic credit, for helping teachers put together curriculum units and then helping teach these units to junior high youth. The projects involve several stages, including survey work to determine specific community needs, identification of work roles relating to these needs, as well as the actual curriculum development and teaching process. This model could easily be adapted to include health care fields (in the case of Oregon youth, for example, focusing perhaps on a unique health problem such as local hepatitis outbreaks in the area linked to groundwater contamination). In Boise, Idaho, for example, a similar project in preventative health care has been attempted, with high school students teaching Drug Education to junior high age youth.

A second major effort to solve the health manpower shortage problem in rural areas has been the movement to overcome the many obstacles to full utilization of mid-level and para-professionals (including physicians assistants, nurse practitioners, and paramedics) in rural counties. Until the passage of the Rural Health Clinics bill (HR 8422) in 1977, Medicare-Medicaid payments regulations severely discriminated against rural areas in the use of these important alternative primary health care providers. According to existing regulations, reimbursement for such mid-level professional services could be made only if a physician were actually present on the clinic premises...which was a possibility in urban clinics with a larger client population, but which was not the case in rural areas, where physicians assistants were often only in contact through phone or radio with the physician. Similarly, while certain primary care roles could be fulfilled by pharmacists in a rural clinic setting, reimbursement by Medicare-Medicaid was not permitted. With the passage of HR 8422, these impediments have been removed. However, many state laws still mitigate against the full utilization of mid-level medical professionals in primary health care clinics. Since 1969, $65 million in Federal funds has been expended to encourage use of and train such professionals and even more can and needs to be done in this area. According to evaluations of such programs: "Primary Care Clinics staffed by nurse practitioners and physicians assistants are valuable alternatives, especially in remote areas. They have a strong record in recruiting and retaining personnel." (22.3) With retention a major factor in solving the health care problem in rural areas, this model continues to offer much hope for relieving the manpower shortage on a more permanent basis.

It has only been since the Vietnam war that favorable regulations have made the widespread use of paramedics possible, yet another effective approach to improving rural health care. In rural areas such as Central Illinois, many communities are engaged in ambitious fund raising programs both to encourage such training for ambulance personnel and to furnish the sophisticated equipment needed to develop such mobile medical care assistance programs. Using state and federal funds, the entire state of Illinois has developed a mobile trauma treatment network, linking

rural and urban areas to selected trauma treatment hospitals via helicopter. Communities like Peoria have also developed "health care on wheels" clinics, housed in transportable mobile homes, that go out with teams to housing projects and isolated communities on a regularly scheduled basis in order to provide preventative health care and other services to the poor, elderly, and others who cannot afford the transportation costs or otherwise access needed medical assistance.

Other experimental group health care delivery systems also have been singled out as worthy of priority attention, among them ambulatory core health care centers with groups of doctors working together to meet rural community health needs and relating to one another as a means of overcoming the isolation of rural practice. By 1976, 164 such centers were operating nationwide, many of them including the widest possible range of services, including pharmacy, dental, mental health, and even lab facilities. In 1978, HEW, [illegible], and DOL launched a 3-year program to build 300 such rural primary health care centers, coupled with a program to train 1,000 poverty level people for related allied health jobs. (27.1) Similarly, as of 1976, Medicaid grants had successfully funded 15 health care "satellite sites" in remote areas linked to established health organizations. But it must be emphasized that the kind of multi-faceted health care program described here takes an average of 3 years to develop--which points again to a need for funding stability in Federal programming geared to developing such rural models. (22.3, 22.1) Still another initiative area is the funding of facilities for rural health care practitioners. Studies of such systems in Canada have shown that local initiatives from the private sector can be successful, but rarely is it practical to depend on the efforts of private business enterprise... where the need to realize a reasonable return on investment often makes rental or purchase prices for physicians unreasonably high given the average income of the rural health care practitioner. Most successful among the Canadian initiatives were efforts to stimulate professional community service clubs to build and maintain facilities as part of their charitable community service program. (22.1)

With the current stalemate in efforts to fund a national insurance program, it is particularly essential to assess what ramifications this policy has for rural residents. In fact, the lack of such a program discriminates severely against rural residents, many of whom have totally inadequate health insurance protection because of the parttime nature of their employment (in recreational or seasonal jobs) or because they are self-employed. With access to health care so costly in rural areas and with the high poverty rate and already low salary levels in rural as compared to urban communities, private non-group plans with their relatively high deductions make preventative health care a luxury for many rural residents. Medicaid plans further discriminate against the rural poor, in that unlike the urban poor, over 70 percent of those under the poverty level in rural areas are two-parent homes with the father employed...while Medicaid benefits go mainly to one-parent households. Thus, many rural residents find themselves too "rich" for Medicaid, yet too poor to afford primary health care without adequate insurance protection. (22.3, 22.4)

There is also a critical need to recognize the links between other inadequate services and the problems rural Americans face in receiving adequate health care services. Poor roads, high gasoline costs, and lack of public transportation systems make it extremely difficult for many rural residents, particularly the poor and the elderly to receive adequate care, especially since 20 percent of all rural residents (as compared to 10 percent of their urban counterparts) must travel more than a half hour in order to obtain health care services. (19.0) Similarly, lack of adequate water systems in many rural areas represents a formidible health hazard and the inability to link into municipal water systems, especially in the South, leads to the existence of many households in rural areas without access to fluoridation as part of their preventative health care services. (22.3)

Finally, the whole area of rural health research could stand further scrutiny, as the following example of one small county in Michigan indicates. In one

small rural town in central Michigan in the 1970s, a new hemodialysis unit was introduced into the local hospital. After an unusually high patient morbidity rate, research was conducted which lead to the conclusion that unusual chemical additives in the local water supply was, in effect, poisoning the hemodialysis patients. In a neighboring community, located several miles downstream from major chemical plant dump sites, an unusually high incidence of a rare form of cancer was detected by a local physician. Further research was obviously needed. Yet, it is unlikely that such problems are explored due to lack of adequate research staff, facilities, or funds. Initiatives could be established to encourage local private industry and postsecondary institutions to put their labs, computer facilities, as well as technical staff at the disposal of local physicians in pursuit of such data.

Unmet Transportation-Communication Needs in the Rural Setting

The statistics above regarding the plight of rural residents in obtaining adequate health care (more than 20 percent face travel of a half hour or more to find such assistance) is symptomatic of the impact transportation has in the rural environment. (19.0)

--About 60 percent of communities with 2,500 or less population have no taxi service. (19.0)

--Only 31 percent of the towns with 50,000 or less population have a public transit system. Intercity bus lines serve only about half the towns of 50,000 or less, and since 1972, 1,800 small towns have lost such intercity bus lines. (19.0)

--Fifteen percent of all rural households (57 percent of the rural poor and 47 percent of the rural elderly) do not own a car. Fifty-two percent of rural households only have one car, which cuts off the rest of the family from any reliable means of transportation when the wage earner is out of the home. (19.0)

--Less than 1 percent of rural people working outside the home have public transportation as an option for getting to work. (19.0)

--Regulated air carriers, even prior to the recent cuts due to the nationwide fuel shortages, had cut out nearly 200 service points by 1978 (30 percent of the total served in 1960). (19.0)

--While most rural areas long ago lost any meaningful railway passenger services, they are now faced with loss of motor and rail freight service as well...which represents a formidible threat to the ability of rural areas to compete successfully in marketing their agricultural products or manufactured goods.

--According to Department of Transportation estimates, not only are half the local roads in rural America in "intolerable" condition, 105,500 bridges nationally have been designated as needing replacement or repair--particularly in rural communities. In rural Blue Earth County in Minnesota, for example, 59 of 131 bridges fail to meet minimum safety standards and some communities in the area have roads which are so bad because of flooding and disrepair that for at least 3 months of every year, these villages are inaccessible to truck traffic. (21.1, 21.2)

--With local daily and weekly newspapers becoming increasingly less viable financially, many rural communities are losing what remaining communication mechanisms they may have had to break the isolation and retain the community's sense of identity.

--Past cuts in postal service and proposed programs to close as high as 57 percent of existing Post Offices (ostensibly without "hurting" service) would deprive thousands of communities of adequate communications systems in rural areas. Similarly, proposals by the General Accounting Office to the Commerce Department have been made to cut essential weather forecasting and storm warning service in rural areas. (21.7)

The kind of transportation and communication needs outlined above impact not only on the ability of rural residents (particularly the poor and the elderly) to access other vital services such as health care, but also dramatically effect the ability of rural residents to find employment, market their products, and communicate with one another in ways that enhance the ability of a village or county to find common solutions to political, social, and economic problems. Because of the great diversity in the geography and demographics of the many different rural communities (for example, whether or not a given state is located so that the Federal Interstate highway system can act as major in-state travel arteries as well), it is difficult to deal with upgrading rural transportation services on some kind of national "formula" plan. But certain basic priorities are apparent.

First, greater coordination needs to be developed among federal, state, and local transportation programming so that existing funds are utilized with as little waste as possible. As of 1979, there were more than 114 different programs providing transportation assistance in rural areas, 65 of them coordinated and/or operated by

the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare at a level of over $500 million per year. (20.1) Because many of these programs overlap, duplicate one another, or are excessively categorical, local and state leaders often find it difficult to make maximum use of existing funds. Fearing maintenance of effort problems, Federal agencies also tend to pass off ongoing transportation programs elsewhere as new programs come up, which results in a net loss, rather than a gain in services at a local level. (20.4) Over a 3-year period in the mid-1970s in Missouri, for example, Title XX Social Security monies for senior citizen transportation decreased about 40 percent--at the very point where gas prices were skyrocketing and the need for services was growing accordingly. (20.3) The fragmented nature of rural transportation programming also tends to result in the "deprioritizing" of the whole issue. Because the returns on urban mass transit are relatively visible compared to the complex problems and high costs of improving rural transportation, increased pressure is being applied to "raid" Highway Trust funds, one of the last major sources for improving rural highways, to be used for funding such urban systems. (21.7) Federal agencies --including the Departments of Transportation, HEW, Agriculture, and Labor as well as/the Community and General Services ACTION, and Administrations-- began an initiative in 1979 to develop a more coordinated rural transportation effort:

> --attempting to amend regulations which are either excessively rigid or so categorical that state and local agencies cannot effectively utilize funds, to simplify grant application, accountability, and other logistical procedures, and to make insurance more affordable;
> --attempting to build in more incentives that encourage local sharing of resources by agencies, volunteerism, and private sector transit programs;
> --attempting to link CETA and other training programs to efforts to build improved rural transportation networks. (27.2)

Such efforts at a Federal level should continue to receive highest priority attention.

Second, it is important to recognize that Federal agencies alone are not to blame for the rigidity of programming that inhibits rather than aids local transit system development and sharing of vehicles or funds by various rural constituent groups such as the poor, the elderly, or the handicapped. For example, most states have rigid laws regarding school district transit equipment which acts as a formidible

barrier to innovative community program development. In the South, where transportation problems are particularly acute, the public school transit network could be a logical system on which to build a community transit system: yet regulations strictly prohibit such non-school use of school equipment, tax-free gasoline, and related materials. Georgia, where the public school bus system is run on a statewide as opposed to an individual district basis (the largest public bus system outside of the Soviet Union) has begun to deal with this problem in a highly innovative series of steps in recent years. The state legislature passed a bill permitting use of school buses for transportation of the poor and elderly at the discretion of individual school boards. Simultaneously, those involved in community education began working with the state mandate that all citizens have a right to educational opportunities to determine what specific transport needs are preventing senior citizens and the indigent from participating fully in community life. Valdosta State College, for example, was involved in a survey by local high school students which pinpointed the exact location of elderly residents with transport needs in one rural county, including information about when during the week such services were most needed. As individual school districts come to perceive this possible expanded service mission as a means of building better communications and voting coalitions with their rural elderly constituents, ways are also being explored of linking various federal transportation funds targeted for the elderly to help defray costs of gasoline, maintenance, andlabor in order to expand use of the school bus system for a larger population within the community. (28.0) Rather than discouraging or impeding such local collaboration, Federal programs should attempt to stimulate and reward such efforts wherever possible. In many communities, where compartmentalization and rigidity of regulation is particularly acute, some stronger kind of Federal impetus might be needed. At a National Goals Conference on education-economic development linkages in rural America held in Fall, 1980, local rural experts and leaders called for the formation of Regional Transportation Authorities as a means of ensuring such coordination on a local as well as state and national level.

In addition to aiding expansion of transportation around existing local agency systems or volunteer efforts, governmental units at all levels need to reassess what can be done to encourage and publicize innovative private sector and private enterprise solutions to rural transit problems and lack of labor force mobility. Since the country's first "vanpool" system was introduced by the 3-M Company in 1973, more than 200 employers--as well as unions, local employees, and municipalities--have begun similar systems. If vans are corporately owned, drivers are rewarded by incentives such as free use of vans for personal use on weekends or the opportunity to make a small profit. Particularly in the South, the glut of large "gas guzzlers" has led growing numbers of workers who could not otherwise afford cars to develop cost-sharing "jitney" systems. An average vanpool saves an estimated 5,000 gallons of gasoline per year as well as eliminating 6 tons of air pollution, in addition to the benefits to the many workers who could otherwise ill-afford to get to work in rural areas. The Federal ridesharing interagency initiative program begun in 1979, as well as the Energy Tax Act of 1978 with its tax incentives to private employers initiating vanpool systems are all positive steps which should be continued. (27.2)

Beyond the issue of human services transit needs in rural areas is the whole question of transportation regulations and funding as it impacts on the economic viability and accessibility of rural communities. Representatives of the American trucking industry, for example, point to the proposed deregulation of trucking systems as a policy that could have a devastating effect on many small communities. In a nationwide survey of 900 freight carriers, less than half said that they would continue to serve communities of less than 5,000 people if deregulation went into effect. (2.0) A recent Federal rural Task Force on Agricultural Transportation in the United States also pointed to the issue of standardizing load and size limits for trucks (as well as use of doubles) on interstate highways as a problem that needs to be discussed as part of a conscious Federal economic development policy. With fuel costs skyrocketing, farmers need to be concerned for maximum

marketing efficiency which is greatly complicated by the circuitous routing demanded by the length and load restrictions placed on trucks in pivotal central states such as Minnesota, Tennessee, Iowa, Missouri, and Mississippi. Yet as state representatives point out, mandating elevating such limits to some uniform national standard does not take into account the added wear and tear heavier loads would place on the interstates at a point where funds for repair are shrinking. Discussions of the wisdom of 55 mile-per-hour speed limits for agricultural traffic (in particular for perishable commodities) also impacts on road deterioration as well as conservation issues. ($\begin{matrix}25.0,\\23.0\end{matrix}$) While Task Force members were not unanimous in their recommendation to set 80,000 pounds and 65 feet as the maximum load and size limits on Interstates and other major highways, there was more concensus that Congress needs to consider possible legislative incentives to States as a tool for resolving the load/size limit controversy. Experts also recommended increasing the types of agriculture-related materials exempted from freight regulation, simplifying interstate licensing procedures, developing standardized contracts of haul by the Secretary of Agriculture for certain kinds of agricultural products, and continued assistance by USDA in helping/unregulated truckers with the data needed for them to remain competitive. (23.0) Representatives of WESTPO (Western Governor's Policy Office) go even farther in encouraging states to develop cooperative "electronic marketing" systems that make maximum use of technology in determining the most effective overall transit patterns for agricultural regions. (26.9)

From a "bricks and mortar perspective, rural experts express great concern for the lack of adequate Federal, state, and local funds to rehabilitate roads and bridges, not only in rural areas, but parts of the Federal Interstate system as well. With railroads proposing to abandon increasing numbers of rural branchlines, even greater strain is anticipated on existing rural road and highway infrastructures. Witnesses before a recent series of hearings on agricultural transportation proposed that both more Highway Trust Funds and Safer-Off-System-Roads Program monies be allocated to dealing with rural road problems (particularly with the ongoing reduction in the Federal-aid secondary road program). Recommendations also included loosening

excessively inflexible Highway Trust Fund regulations and continuing the Off-System program even after the interstates with which the program is associated are completed. (23.0) Particular discussion needs to be given to state level or other appropriate kinds of assistance programs to remote rural areas or those which by accident of geography are unable to link into interstate systems easily. With shrinking rail service and lack of freight access because of seasonal flooding or deteriorating bridges, many small communities will soon be unable to either market their commodities or access needed products and materials.

The whole issue of the future of rail service in rural communities is a highly volitaile one: from the perspective of business, industrial, and agricultural representatives, as well as from the viewpoint of rail officials themselves. The recent Federal Task Force on rural agricultural transportation cited rail transport as the most hotly contested transportation problem discussed in the hearings. The Task Force as a whole agreed that railroads must be allowed to abandon more marginal branchline systems, but agreed with agricultural experts who felt that some proposed abandonment targets could often be viable if roadbeds and crossings were upgraded. Shortages of available railcars were cited by producers most often as the single greatest problem they faced in accessing rail service. With the increasing use of "unit trains" to expedite agricultural marketing, small producers complained of the total inability of some regions to get rail cars to ship their goods, yet rail companies discriminate against cooperatives that own their own cars. Rail carriers, meanwhile, cited labor problems, excessive regulations regarding labor and line abandonment options, as well as an excessive turnaround time on abandonment petitions as all factors contributing to the perceived poor quality of service they were able to provide. (23.0)

Task Force representatives recommended a more flexible system of rail legislation that would enable producers to negotiate contracts in addition to the system of existing regulated contracts and common-carrier service requirements. Special concern needed to be given to protecting captive users and those who cannot fit into "unit train"marketing patterns, to basing rail abandonment on better

of 1976
data procedures including the System Diagram Map Process (part of the 4-R Act), shortening abandonment deliberation proceedings from the current year or more to a maximum of 195 days, and coordinating branchline rehabilitation programs of DOT, DOC, and USDA as much as possible. The Task Force also recommended expansion of the redeemable preference share loan program for rail rehabilitation (particularly for those lines serving the export market), assisting small shippers in contracting for services through a short-term joint USDA-DOT information-sharing project, and developing such model programs as a rural "transportative cooperative" system and a demonstration fleet of free-running freight cars as a means of alleviating the general shortage of covered hopper cars. Because rail management has not taken advantage of loosened restrictions under the recent 4-R Act in order to improve services, the Task Force strongly recommended Federal monitoring of recommended changes and programs, as well as aggressive agency interaction with rail officials to promote more innovative, flexible stances on the part of rail companies to service improvement. (23.4)

In the past twenty years, waterway transportation has become increasingly competitive as an agricultural shipping system, especially in the case of export commodities. In 1960, only 14 million tons of grains and oilseeds were shipped by barge, compared to 50 million tons in 1973 (about 40 percent of the export total for these products). Because of the high fuel efficiency of water transport, this mode of shipping is expected to grow radically in the next decades. In order to facilitate this development, the Agricultural Transportation Task Force has proposed accelerated construction of the Locks and Dam 26 at Alton, Illinois, by the Corps of Engineers, authorization of a second lock at that site to expand export transit capacity and to deal with emergency closing of the main lock, consideration of expanding the Snake-Columbia River system Bonneville Lock, and discussions with Canada regarding expansion of the Welland Canal linking the Great Lakes with the St. Lawrence River. (23.0)

Finally, in the area of air services, rural businesses and industries seem to be more affected by service reductions than agriculture. Some farm producers report

reluctance of air carriers to assume liability for perishable commodites since deregulation of air cargo went into effect, but the Transportation Task Force recommended that a longitudinal study be undertaken to monitor this impact on air common-carrier obligations. While regulated carriers have eliminated service to 30 percent of all communities served in the last 20 years, more than 200 commuter airlines have been created during that period to help fill those gaps: now serving an estimated 400 communities, more than half of which have no air service other than a commuter line. More than $200 million was targeted in fiscal year 1979-81 by EDA, SBA, and FmHA to extending commuter air service and upgrading of small community air facilities. In many cases, if rural communities are to be able to successfully expand their industrial bases, some form of special incentives to the private sector and governmental loan assistance will be needed to stimulate such efforts to improve the accessibility and competitiveness of rural communities. (27.2)

Finally, government at all levels needs to expand its vision to the whole issue of communication programmatic needs and initiatives, not merely mortar, equipment, and social services. On one level, the problem is one of very specific local communication needs: access to postal and weather information, and the need for media communication that binds communities together as viable political entities. With more and more rural newspapers falling victim to rising publishing and distribution costs, greater emphasis needs to be placed on stimulating alternative rural communications systems at a local level. Some rural communities have found that innovative local public service cable television and radio programming have been highly effective as vital community media linkages. Yet in more remote areas, such options do not exist. About 1.2 million rural households do not have access to even a single television channel; on the average, rural households receive only half the number of channels available to urban households. (27.4)

In part, restrictive regulations at a Federal level designed to insure adequate broadcasting competition in urban areas have actually mitigated against service development in rural areas. Responding to this problem, a number of key government agencies announced a series of initiatives in 1979 to deal with expanding rural communications options: (27.4)

> --The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NITA) of the Department of Commerce submitted proposals to the Federal Communications Commission calling for abandonment of cable television ownership restrictions in rural areas and for development of a class of new low power broadcast stations adapted to rural conditions. Under the aegis of the civilian space program, NITA pledged to assist agencies at all levels (Federal, state, and local) to acquire satellite communications services in rural areas. In 1979, NITA also administered $13 million in grants to rural areas with inadequate public broadcast services.
>
> --The Department of Agriculture initiated a program to assist rural telephone companies develop television and other communications services, including incentives such as direct loans and loan guarantees to make necessary phone line changes.
>
> --A coalition of agencies (including Agriculture, Commerce, HEW, and CSA) funded demonstration projects in 13 states to assess the feasibility of using telecommunications systems to provide health, educational, and other vital services to remote rural communities.

Such relaxation of regulations and model demonstration funding would both tend to encourage innovative programming by the private sector and would encourage public agencies to experiment with new uses of technology in meeting communication as well as other essential service needs of isolated rural citizens. In light of the vital services function broadcasting can play in rural areas, current trends toward minimizing such public service responsibilities needs to be seriously reassessed.

On a more profound level, it cannot be stressed enough that the lack of adequate information and data is among the most single pressing problems facing rural Americans in their quest for local development. Lack of critical information regarding legislation, funding, demographic trends, and model programming has tended to reinforce rural isolation and contribute to a fear of outreach and innovation. Some more venturesome communities--many of them out of a desperate drive to capture as many of their otherwise "lost" tax dollars as possible--have managed to overcome

general rural distaste for government complexity and fear of Federal interference in order to secure the technical and financial help needed to deal with local problems beyond the scope of their own meagre local resources. Thousands of others have tended to stagnate, not by choice, but by an inability to find the appropriate assistance or by the inability to effectively impact on political decision-making.

The technology now exists that would make this kind of isolation unnecessary. Rural leaders from all over the United States who attended a series of national Goals Conferences on Linking Education and Economic Development in rural areas in 1980, pointed time and again to a critical need for a centralized computer information bank dealing with vital grant, legislative, demographic, and model programmatic data that could help rural communities network with one another and key rural experts in Washington and around the country in order to solve common problems and locate needed funding and other kinds of assistance. Retrieval mechanisms, including over-the-phone document transmission equipment and computer terminals, are becoming accessible and reasonable enough that soon even the most isolated communities could realistically tap into such a resource bank. A growing number of urban private and public sector organizations are already utilizing such systems. If rural areas do not quickly learn to take advantage of this new communications technology and begin some sort of effective nationwide information sharing program, they will find that their lack of access to data and technical assistance--already so acutely felt--will cause them to lag even further behind urban America in economic, educational, and support service development. A whole series of rural networking initiatives will be described in greater detail in this chapter as part of a discussion of the issue of rural "capacity building." In some respects, the widespread lack of access to information and inability to impact effectively on government policy is the most damaging kind of discrimination faced by rural American communities. (13.0)

Housing Needs of Rural Americans

To be sure, tremendous progress has been made in rural housing development in the past 25 years: by 1975, 58 percent of all rural housing had central heating as opposed to 23 percent in 1950. Substandard housing in rural areas declined by 79 percent from 1970-1975 as compared to 69 percent for urban America. (3.0) Yet, rural areas continue to lead urban America in the amount of substandard housing units still being utilized. As of 1975, 8 percent of all occupied nonmetro housing units were substandard as compared to 4 percent for occupied metropolitan units. In other words, 1.9 million rural households continue to live in substandard conditions. A disproportionate number of these rural households were either Black, poor, or elderly: 20 percent (compared to 15% in 1950) were Black; 35 percent had a head of household over 65 (compared to 18% in 1950). Of these 1.9 million rural households, 57 percent earned less than $2,000 a year in 1975 (constant 1950 dollars). (3.0) In some states with high rural populations, the situation is particularly acute. Among rural Alaskan native populations, for example, 8,000 out of about 11,000 occupied units are classified as substandard. (21.5)

With mortgage and home improvement loan interest rates increasing so dramatically, the problems of further improvement in substandard housing and adequate availability of new housing to meet the growing population in rural areas are serious issues. As urban migrants to rural areas push demand for housing, housing costs, and taxes to meet new demands for services upward, the poor, the elderly, and minorities living in rural areas will find it increasingly difficult to afford what housing they do have. In the past, many rural communities have resisted proposals to systematically participate in programs that would stimulate low-cost housing development for the poor or elderly out of some fear of changing the demographics of the community. Because statistics clearly show that the rural population is tending to "age" faster than the population in general, however, demographics <u>are</u> changing in rural America, and government at all levels--Federal, State, and local--must take these trends into account when proposing any future rural housing policies.

Several recent Federal initiatives point to awareness that the housing priorities of rural Americans are shifting somewhat. A model $7.5 million rural housing "set-aside" project was begun in 1979 to construct 10 "congregate" elderly housing facilities, with social services provided on-site.(27.1) An Interagency Program to Improve Farm Worker Housing, funded under the CETA Title VI Farm Worker Act is in the process of funneling $8 million in funds into 28 states to improve existing and create new housing units for migrant workers. As of fiscal 1980-81, the second year of the program, an estimated 500-800 units had either been built or were being rehabilitated, utilizing an additional $40-50 million in leverage funds. With DOL acting as lead organization for the project and providing 90 percent of the funds, HUD, CSA, and FmHA all contributed staff and designated liaisons within their own agencies, targeted set asides within certain of their own programs for the project or actually contributed funds in order to reduce fragmentation, eliminate duplication, and produce the maximum program impact through close coordination and cooperation of personnel. Dialogue has been established with other agencies to attempt to link this program with Department of Energy solar energy programs, Health and Human Services health care programs, and crisis intervention programs for migrant workers. These kinds of specialized programs recognize the growing inability of the low income farm workers and elderly to cope with housing problems in rural communities and should continue to be given high priority...especially as agencies are attempting to coordinate funding in order to achieve maximum programmatic impact. (24.0)

Organizations in the western United States such as WESTPO (Western Governor's Policy Office) have also expressed concern for the possible strains on existing housing imposed by various private and public energy programs in their regions, including development of oil and gas production along the Overthrust Belt and possible population explosions resulting from the projected MX Missile program, and the various synthetic fuels and oil shale projects proposed for the region. Demands caused by the Overthrust development in southwest Wyoming alone is estimated to be more than $211.5 million just for land, housing construction and/or mobile home purchases in order to house project workers, to say nothing of strain on other

rebuild community services and resources. (26.3)

Rural Sanitary Facility, Water and Energy Problems

Just as inadequate transportation services affect not only quality of life, but also economic development potential in rural communities, so the whole question of energy, water, and sanitary services impacts on both the human and economic needs of rural areas:

> --1.3 million rural residents live in homes without running water; 7.2 million rural Americans utilize wells or other water sources which do not qualify as safe drinking water; another 6.5 million rural people are serviced by community water systems which fall below minimum Public Health Service standards; (27.3, 21.8)
>
> --An estimated 32,000 communities in the United States need water and sewer systems; more than 2.4 million rural residents have inadequate sewage disposal services; (21.1,27.3)
>
> --As American farms have become larger in order to survive, they have also become increasingly less labor and more energy intensive...a trend which is now running hard up against the realities of soaring energy costs. (16.0, 17.0)
>
> --In areas of the Southwest and Pacific Northwest where agriculture is so heavily dependent on massive irrigation systems, energy costs and the rapid loss of groundwater reserves is bringing the entire viability of agriculture in some regions into question. In Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Texas, and Oklahoma--which produce 23 percent of all American farm products--water tables have dropped so significantly that geologists warn that many western areas may be out of irrigation water within 20 years.(21.9)

Heavy emphasis in recent years on environmental considerations, failure to adjust regulations regarding water and sewer system technology to rural conditions and economic feasibility, and persistent underbudgeting for Federal programs to assist rural areas in such systems development have all contributed to effectively eliminating many small rural communities from competing for industrial development to improve and diversify economic bases and offer new employment options to workers displaced by the mechanization and consolidation of American agriculture. Pending economic policies once again propose cutting loans and grants for rural water and sewer systems from $1.0 billion to $600 million, failing to take into account the legacy of such underfunding of rural projects. In 1978, for example, only $250 million was proposed for Rural Development Act water and waste disposal grants and loans, despite the fact that in 1977 there was already a backlog of $1.7 billion in grant and loan applications in that category. (21.1)

The case of Broadalbin, New York, cited earlier in this chapter is a stark example of the tremendous frustrations small communities face in attempting to

upgrade inadequate water, sewer, and sanitary facilities. While it would be folly to propose wholesale abandonment of environmental regulations in rural areas in order to attract potential industry (as is, rural areas have too long become the convenient dumping grounds for urban industrial pollutants), Federal and state agencies need to be more sensitive to the realities of existing rural services, service demands, and the costs for developing such systems when proposing legislation of a regulatory nature or related to funding priorities. It is particularly important to remember when assessing the extent to which the private sector is to be saddled with environmental protection costs, how appropriate some requirements and the resulting costs might be in light of the small scale of many rural businesses and industries.

As part of a Federal initiative begun in 1978, an Interagency Coordinating Group--made up of staff from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ), the Community Services Administration (CSA), and the Departments of Agriculture (FmHA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Commerce (EDA), and Labor--began working on agreements that would better coordinate rural water and sewer programs, at a Federal and state level: (27.3)

> --identifying lower cost technologies suited to rural population demands and scaling down programs and regulations as needed and appropriate (including use of funds for individual household systems);
>
> --reducing paperwork and administrative requirements for communities receiving funds, including incorporating 16 major sets of Federal laws and regulations into a single set of regulations;
>
> --enforcing sharing of needs assessments and similar documents at a Federal level, rather than continuing the practice of each agency having their own set;
>
> --cutting down the application processing procedure and time involved;
>
> --utilizing CETA funds to train 1750 water and wastewater treatment technicians to meet manpower shortages in rural communities.

This effort needs to be encouraged and intensified, both from the point of view of eliminating waste and overlap and of making it possible for rural areas to develop systems appropriate to their unique local needs.

The issue of water services goes far beyond the question of adequate facilities for individual and industrial needs, however. In many areas of the United States, the heaviest use of water is neither by households or industry, but by farms and related agricultural enterprises. With drought or near-drought conditions in large areas of the west as well as in the New York area in recent years, the problem of water usage priorities is becoming more and more urgent. The situation in Colorado is a good example:

> In the conflict over water usage, urban advocates point out that only 2.7 percent of the water in the state is used by municipalities, 2.3 percent by industry, while 95 percent is utilized by agriculture. If farmers represent only 3 percent of the state's population, this usage pattern--on the surface--would seem unrealistic. As Morgan Smith, Colorado's commissioner of Agriculture points out, however, such reasoning fails to take into account how much water is needed for feeding the average Colorado household: while only 220 gallons of water per day are used by the average citizen, if the water needed to produce the typical daily diet of 2,572 calories is added to the "domestic usage" column, 4,533 gallons needs to be added to the 220 gallon figure! (26.8)

Not just in Colorado, irrigation, fertilizer production, and food processing all demand utilization of tremendous amounts of water in many areas of the United States. In Nebraska, groundwater levels have dropped so dramatically that farmers are literally at war with one another in some cases over use of water for irrigation. Some states such as South Dakota, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas have begun to formulate policies regarding water usage (with a variety of systems such as establishment of groundwater districts, mandating automatic cutoff valves on irrigation systems that limit water use or metering fee systems to encourage water conservation). In the case of the Colorado River, the states of Arizona, Colorado, and California have had to set basic regulations governing the amount of water to each state. But for the most part, the problem remains unsolved and highly controversial. The Central Arizona Power Project along the Colorado River that will generate electricity needed by cities such as Tempe, Phoenix and West Phoenix is proceeding toward completion, but some experts privately lament that this energy availability will only further encourage residential growth to the detriment of agricultural water needs elsewhere. Farmers in some areas of the West are finding it more profitable to sell their water rights to local

communities for as high as $3 million, meanwhile risking dryland farming and taking crop losses as tax write-offs. The Peripheral Canal in California continues to divert water used by small farmers in the Sacramento and San Jacquin Valleys across the state for use by large farmers in the Southern San Jacquin and Imperial Valleys and for human consumption in the Los Angeles area. Experts fear that such water removal could result in a salinization of the water supply in northern California, making the region totally incapable of agricultural production. Despite attempts at water usage regulation in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, water tables in the Ogallala Aquifer are continuing to go down by a foot or more a year.(25.0, 26.0

Given the magnitude of the conflict over water resources and the fact that the issue transcends local and state boundaries, it would seem appropriate if not essential that the Federal government assume some kind of responsibility for initiatives in this area. Government hydroelectric projects, as well as proposed energy initiatives--such as coal slurry projects, synthetic fuel and gas liquification plants, oil shale mining--all are attempting to solve one specific set of resource problems, at the same time magnifying the water use issue because of the tremendous amounts of water used in these technological processes. Similarly, construction of the proposed MX-Missile system will place tremendous water resource demands on areas already facing critical water shortages. Some residents of rural Mercer County, North Dakota, fearing the same impact on plant life caused to the west of them by a coal fired electrical generating facility, have grave doubts about the impact the synthetic fuel plant under development in Beulah will have on local agriculture. Proposed lignite strip mining operations in the western part of the state might not interfere with water demands of local dryland farms and ranches, but with each mining operation, as much as 30 square miles of land would be taken out of production and future land reclamation techniques on such a massive scale are not proven. (26.0)

The question is partly the whole viability of government energy policies in many areas, but also is partly one of a more studied, balanced Federal role in solving the inter-state issues of water usage by the various regions, states,

populations, and economic interest groups. Innovative low water-demand agriculture (including cultivation of guayule and jojoba as sources of products like rubber, waxes, and oils for industrial use) and projects such as coal slurry systems using methanol or ethanol instead of water need to also be explored as possible solutions to both the water shortages and need for energy development in western areas. (26.2, 26.9)

In the area of energy development overall, rural areas are paying dearly for policies which so long encouraged artificially low petroleum fuel prices. Rural school districts, faced with high labor and building maintenance costs, looked to the relatively cheap expedient of consolidation and long-range busing of students as cost saving measures. Now, with energy costs soaring, the whole consolidation concept is being brought into question. Moreover, some educators are beginning to point to the tremendous price in human terms being paid by young rural children who spend up to 3 hours a day of their lives riding a bus instead of studying or participating in family or community activities. Similarly, in the case of rural agriculture, some experts are predicting that current energy costs combined with growing groundwater problems could trigger a dramatic revolution in American agriculture. For years, sociologists have written of the dangers to rural communities in the decline of the small farm, as larger and larger agricultural units became increasingly viable from a financial point of view. With energy costs driving up the price of massive irrigation and long distance transportation prices to Northern and Eastern metropolitan centers, small Northern family farms may once again be in a position to successfully compete in the food production market. (17.0)

In general, farmers may have to rethink the "resource mix" used in farm production--possibly with labor and land costs increasing in proportion to capital. This could "reverse present trends toward larger and fewer farms, as measured by gross sales and by land area." Energy costs could also lead to more reliance on organic farming and a return to mixed farming and crop rotation:

> "With high product prices and changed diseconomies of size, the requirements for intensive management might increase and size of farm would change accordingly." (17.0)

No one is seriously proposing a return to extensive use of horses or manual labor to combat the cost of gasoline, but the relative viability of large and small farms certainly has been opened to possible reinterpretation. More and more farmers will also need to rethink innovative group cooperation strategies as means of getting around the high capital outlays needed for more energy efficient equipment. (16.0) Decentralization in retailing and other new marketing patterns such as regional "electronic" agricultural marketing (and interstate grain contracts) need to be explored. (26.9)

Above all in the field of energy resource development, rural leaders such as those represented at the 1980 National Goals Conferences linking education and economic development are pointing to a priority need to make better use of proven energy technology and incentives appropriate to each individual community's unique environmental needs and resources...rather than dogged Federal pursuit of high cost, high risk massive projects such as the synthetic fuels programs. (13.0) To date, most Federal energy programs have failed to take into account the fact that in scale and scope, the energy needs of 50 million rural Americans are fundamentally different than those of their urban counterparts. As a representative of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association expressed it:

> "Not only are the energy needs of rural America different, but they are mandated.
>
> We cannot switch to coal. We can't walk to work and we can't train all those coyotes to pull a plow. The gospel of conservation won't save us because we don't waste. Nobody ever went joyriding on a tractor or left air-conditioning on in a pasture." (21.10)

No one is denying that American agriculture cannot and need not become more energy efficient. The point is that emphasis to date nationally has been on conservation measures and technology best suited to the urban environment or to urban needs. Proven alternative energy technology exists for small scale wind, solar, scrap wood and gasohol systems, tidal and other hydro-electrical generation systems which could help relieve shortages in rural communities or provide new lower cost alternatives for agriculture. The key is identifying and developing methods appropriate to specific individual rural geographic areas that are compatible with a balanced growth pattern in those communities. (13.0)

Much is being done, but much more still remains to be accomplished in promoting energy self-sufficiency of American agriculture.

the/ As part of a massive interagency agreement in fiscal years 1979-81, up to 100 small-scale hydroelectric projects were developed in rural America, with a combination of grant, loans, and loan guarantee funds from FmHA, EDA, HUD, CSA, and the Rural Energy Administration and technical assistance from the Department of Energy, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Corps of Engineers. In order to stimulate gasohol plant development, OSHA, EPA, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms were directed to simplify licensing and other procedures needed to begin such plants at a local level, at the same time DOE, EDA, and CSA agree to provide funds for up to 100 such small-scale plants by the end of 1981, producing gasohol for transportation purposes. Other regulations have been developed giving priority to agricultural needs in policies allocating natural gas, middle distillate fuels (such as diesel fuels), and gasoline supplies in case of emergency shortages nationwide. Such policies and programs could be highly effective for meeting long-term energy needs in rural areas and should be continued. The Corps of Engineers estimates that as many as 2,000 existing dams across the United States--particularly in New England--could be economically converted to produce small scale hydro-electric power as a result of such programs. Gasohol plants utilizing sugar beets, wheat, grain sorghum, corn, sugar cane, and food processing wastes would, in effect, mean that farmers would be getting double yield from their crops: as energy sources and as feedstocks for animals. Waste wood from logging operations and undesirable woods in commercial and non-commercial sources could be tapped more and more for innovative heating, steam and power generation systems for both home and industrial use. The wood products industry already meets 45 percent of its own energy needs (equivalent to 500,000-750,000 barrels of oil a day) from such sources. Similarly, DOE and USDA experiments around the country have demonstrated the feasibility and efficiency of using solar energy heating systems for crop and grain drying, as well as for heating of dairy, swine, and poultry facilities. DOE also has funded non-agricultural rural solar systems that could be used in food processing plants, for lumber drying, heating greenhouses, and in diverse industries including chemical and oil refining.

(27.1)

Child Care Needs and Employability in Rural Communities

Much has been written in the past about welfare reform in the United States and possible incentives to encourage employment among women where family income is at a marginal level or where women are actually heads-of-households. According to Congressional Budget Office statistics, this failure t seek employment is largely a matter of simple economics: income levels are so low that it becomes impossible to make child care arrangements for children in such households. In 1975, the following survey was conducted regarding the family incomes of women not seeking employment because they were unable to arrange child care:

> --Of 203,000 wives with children under the age of 6 and not seeking employment, 46.1 percent were living in families with less than $10,000 in annual income; for the additional 146,000 with children between 6-14, 34.9 percent had family incomes under $10,000.
>
> --In the case of 97,000 female heads of families with children under age 6, 86.4 percent had incomes under $5,000 and an additional 13.2 percent were under $10,000 in income; for the 67,000 with children between 6-14, 76.6 percent had incomes under $5,000 and an additional 22.4 percent had incomes under $10,000 annually. (6.0)

Child care costs with such low income levels becomes prohibitive, even if adequate care situations might be available...which is also often not the case in rural areas. Because the extended family phenomenon persisted in rural areas longer than in urban communities, there was previously less incentive to develop child care centers. Now, as this pattern is changing in rural areas as well as urban areas, those women in rural communities who cannot rely on a relative to care for children face bleak prospects for obtaining adequate affordable child care (especially given the overall lower salaries in rural compared to urban areas).

Many model programs exist nationally which could serve as the basis for incentive programs in rural communities needing such child care services. Employer or union-sponsored child care centers such as the Stride Rite project in Boston, the Intermedics program in Texas, and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union 5-state child care project have demonstrated the value of private sector child care services to the employer, individual workers, and the community as a whole. Problems of absenteeism, high turnover, and difficulty

in recruiting workers are minimized...making the labor force climate of a community far more attractive to existing companies and potential industrial growth. By advancing the start-up capital for such care centers, employers are overcoming one of the major difficulties in getting a community child care program off the ground. Workers are in a position to be close to their children, which cuts commuting expenses and problems of stress and/or absenteeism when children are ill. Employers can also effectively assist such adequate child care development by actually handling the financial accounting, staff payrolls, and other economic details through the company's business department: another tremendous potential barrier to child care center development. (6.0)

Employers have also experimented successfully with the voucher system to assist employees in paying their child care costs at existing centers or several industries might form a consortium to start a child care center for their employees. Other plants have developed flextime programs for parents to deal with the problem of child care for youngsters when they are ill, have made a practice of donating scraps and outdated supplies to centers for use in projects, or have made major donations in order to get private community child care programs off the ground. With school age populations shrinking in many rural communities, another alternative to the child care dilemma might be the utilization of abandoned schools and unemployed teachers in the development of pre-school child care centers. Models of this type have been piloted in the Massachusetts area in recent years. In New Hampshire, where there is no public Kindergarten program, people in the town of Sutton--with a total population of 1,000--developed their own privately incorporrted pre-school/kindergarten program which currently enrolls approximately 90-95 percent of all eligible children three days a week. Pre-schoolers pay a tuition fee of $20 per month, but the kindergarten program is free. Funding comes from tuition, a grant from the town government, and fund drives by parents and the center's Board of Directors. In Brooks County, Georgia, where surveys showed a need for more than 500 child care placements, the local high school developed a child care training program with an actual

operating child care facility as a laboratory on site in the high school that both met some of these child care needs of the community and provided job opportunities and training in child care for high school youth. The program realizes a profit of approximately $2,400 per month, despite special subsidies to some parents who cannot afford the modest level of tuition charged. As a result, graduating youth and other residents of the area are discussing starting still more private centers. (28.0)

In short, as the rural community changes--with more problems of divorce and inadequate family income in light of low salaries and rising inflation--Federal and State agencies could play a valuable role in disseminating information and providing the technical expertise which could help rural agencies, employers, and workers adjust to the changing child care needs of individuals who either need to be or are needed as productive members of the local labor force.

Retailing and Recreational Services and the Need for Rural Community Centers

Access to reasonable retailing and recreational options cannot be ignored in rural areas as being a "fringe" issue from either the point of view of the individual rural resident facing inadequate or excessively costly services or from the perspective of such services as a factor in potential recruitment of needed professionals or industries to the community. Through the media, particularly television, rural Americans have become aware of the many, many amenities of life that are available to their urban counterparts and have found their own expectations rising accordingly. Whereas more affluent rural residents and the new wave of urban in-migrants might tend to look to nearby urban centers for some of these economic and recreational services, the poor and elderly--for whom transportation is a major problem--are often totally dependent on local villages for their shopping and entertainment. Although not as important a factor as cost and availability of labor force, land costs, and infrastructure adequacy, such concerns over economic, social, and cultural services also impact on corporate decisions whether or not to locate a plant in a given area...particularly if significant numbers of management staff from the parent corporation are expected to relocate in the area as well. As the study

of young medical school graduates cited earlier in this study indicates, the so-called "amenities" of life, including social and cultural options, have a strong impact on these young professional's decision to locate in a given community.

Underlying this concern for the adequacy of retailing and recreation services is the whole issue of the cohesiveness of rural communities and the need to identify with some kind of local center of social and cultural life. The study of 13 small rural communities in New York state cited early on in this chapter points clearly to a pattern of decline in economic services, in particular, over the past decade in rural communities. (15.0) Until the recent soaring costs of gasoline, rural residents were beginning to bypass local retailing centers for the more inclusive nearby urban centers. Even as urban migrants began moving to rural settings in greater numbers, many of them continued to seek their economic and recreational services by commuting to nearby larger communities. Meanwhile, what traditional small retail centers were available in rural communities found that they are not benefiting in any real way from the population growth around them. (8.0) In part, local entrepreneurs had failed to adjust to the changing expectations and needs of the rural population group around them; in part, they lacked the technical expertise to assess these needs and to develop the new marketing strategies to meet them.

With high transportation costs forcing many rural residents to reconsider their buying habits and recreational needs, local rural entrepreneurs are in a good position to reestablish themselves as centers of community economic and social life...but they must do so in the context of the demographic changes going on around them. Agencies such as the Small Business Administration need to explore the possibilities of gearing workshops and other programmatic initiatives to helping rural entrepreneurs cope with the changing marketing patterns and life style demands of both the long-time resident and the new migrants to these rural communities if many of the small rural retail and recreational centers are to survive as genuine social underpinnings of their communities. With much of the new job growth in small communities coming in this economic and recreational services sector, the whole problem has great significance for potential

employment diversification and stabilization of the labor force in many rural areas.

A related issue is the lack of Federal government understanding of the realities of consumer patterns in rural life, as evidenced by the substantial discrepancy between poverty level standards for farm and non-farm families. In 1978, poverty levels for a farm family of four were set at $5,200 as opposed to $6,240 for a non-farm family. (5,0) This $1,000 difference would suggest a stereotypical view that consumer costs in rural areas are lower and, that whatever poverty farm families may be facing, they can always subsist by growing their own food...thus achieving a certain independence from the high costs of the marketplace. In fact, fewer and fewer farmers (large or parttime small producers) are in a position to grow their own food, concentrating instead on achieving maximum cash sales production for time and effort expended. As a result, farmers are facing food costs inflated by high-cost national marketing patterns and increased transportation costs to remote areas, just as the ordinary consumer does at the local supermarket. Lower rural housing costs and taxes may affect overall cost of living somewhat, but for the rural poor, the likelihood of having to settle for substandard housing is greater than for urban residents and rural taxes are not likely to remain as low due to the services expectations of the new urban in-migrants.

Overall, rural experts do not seem to have a clear picture of exactly how the dynamics of changing rural economic life will ultimately reshape the nature and concept of the rural community as an important nexus of local social, economic, and cultural life. It is clear, however, that there is a need for rural agencies at both the Federal and State level to help supply the expertise that many local communities and entrepreneurs lack in surviving this potentially wrenching transition.

Capacity Building as an Overriding Need in Rural Communities

In the discussion above of the various needs and problems involving support services development in rural America, some of the "lacks" are clearly

in the area of adequate Federal and State funding and related "bricks and mortar" considerations. Along with that lack of funds for infrastructure and programmatic development, however, is an even more basic problem: the lack of the technical know-how in many rural communities to deal with the magnitude of the problems facing them and the ability to successfully compete for those funds which are available. The case of Broadalbin, New York, and its 10 years of unsuccessful attempt to find the grant assistance to upgrade its water system is a classic example of the frustrations many rural communities face in meeting their support service needs. Thus, the whole issue of "capacity building" becomes of prime importance.

In a series of National Goals Conferences on Linking Education and Economic Development in rural America in summer and fall, 1980, local rural experts from the mid-West, far West, South, and Northeast spoke time and again of the tremendous need for a centralized information and technical assistance dissemination system that would enable rural communities to effectively access key data that would help them overcome their geographic isolation in developing programs and locating appropriate fund sources for local projects. (13.0) Many rural agencies do not have access to the Federal Register or because of their isolation, receive Requests for Proposals so late that it is virtually impossible to write a successful grant. Even if RFPs arrive relatively timely, quite frequently local agency staffs so overworked that there is little time to devote to such grant writing or the personnel lacks the experience and expertise to put together an effective proposal. Complex Federal grant boilerplate requirements, lack of knowledge of the "in" vocabulary and needlessly complex jargon, regulations clearly written with an urban bias or which are so restrictive that it is virtually impossible to write a grant to fit local needs, and the maze of qualifying requirements, all contribute to stymie local rural groups seeking Federal funding. Imagine the sense of futility of a local agency director attending a session on grant writing at a

Washington conference who is told repeatedly of the importance of getting to know key Federal bureaucrats in a particular grant-giving agency by repeated visits and phone calls, if the director faces a highly limited phone budget and is restricted to only limited in-state travel for the most part by budget constraints. Similarly, most local rural agency program or governmental directors are sophisticated enough to know that there certainly must be precedents for what they are attempting to do in their communities...but lack time, money, and research staff, as well as the lack of any single information resources on a wide range of rural problems makes it difficult if not impossible to locate appropriate models.

A proposed National Rural Communications Demonstration Project could be one effective means of developing such a centralized technical assistance, resource brokering system. Key to such a project would be a computer-based media system which could be accessed through regional terminals in key rural areas, as well as through possible access through existing systems such as the various state occupational information computer program networks operated by state departments of education or employment security commission offices. With computer retrieval systems and document transmission systems via phone hookups becoming less and less expensive, it will soon be economically feasible for even small rural communities to access such information through terminals at local firehalls, libraries, or other central community sites. Through this rural computer information bank, local agencies and committees would be able to access:

--legislative overviews of key trends impacting on rural areas, as well as summaries of key demographic trends in rural America;

--pending and existing grant programs (along with information regarding past recipients and an analysis of the applicability of such programs to specific needs and the odds of receiving a grant based on past ratios of applicants to recipients) which could be helpful in locating funds for specific support service needs;

--sample boilerplate and formats for key RFPs which could meet a wide range of local rural infrastructure and programmatic needs;

--abstracts of key projects and model programs in the area of support services development, including contact names, addresses, and bibliographies of pertinent printed materials available describing the programs in greater detail.

--possible advocacy groups or individuals that could assist the given community in developing specific projects;

--names of recognized experts who could serve as consultants on a low fee or gratis basis.

By encouraging easy input and output with the computer bank system, the pool of available information would continue to grow and be disseminated. Individual communities would be able to cut turnaround time in the grant application process and in program development, avoid high meeting and travel costs, and overcome limited phone and other communications budgets. (13.0)

Another effective "capacity building" mechanism at the Federal or state level could be the use of highly skilled technical assistance "circuit riders" in rural areas who either through governmental grant or special private sector release time programs could be made available to high economic distress areas as special consultants in dealing with specific support service or other development issues, at little or no cost to the local community. Linkages to such rural ombudsmen could be established through the proposed computer information system, through Agricultural Extension Offices, and other appropriate agencies with a broad geographic service network already in place. (13.0)

Nationally, at a state level, and locally, the whole issue of capacity building needs to be reconsidered in light of the urban-to-rural migration in recent years and its impact on the individual rural community. Traditionally, rural communities have been characterized by sociologists as having a relatively stable leadership hierarchy, with certain key families or members of key companies or organizations playing a major role in community decision-making. Because of the long promulgated ideal of rural independence, this community leadership may have often tolerated substandard services in the name of reluctance to relate to the dictates of Federal or state agencies interfering in local life...particularly as long as the extended family and strong social institutions such as churches

were able and willing to play a major role in assisting those individuals most affected by the lack of adequate services due to age, low income, lack of benefits accompanying regular employment, or other factors. Due to an overall decline in certain key services in the rural environment (particularly decreasing public transportation options), lessening local retail availability, and increasing health care and other costs with no greater ease in accessing such services, in many cases the gap between services available to the economically disadvantaged and the average rural resident has become greater, at the same time traditional family, religious, and other voluntary mechanisms for overcoming these barriers have become weaker. The influx of more services-oriented urban migrants has also increased demand for and strain on existing community programs, putting further pressure on traditional patterns of leadership and values systems in the rural community.

If a given rural leadership structure is to respond to these new pressures on traditional ways of doing things and the new urban constituency is to be successfully assimilated into the local power structure, a whole new set of political issues needs to be explored at a local level. Federal and state agencies dealing with rural communities could be in a unique position to encourage this process of new coalition building and awareness development. To approach the situation as a mandate to "throw out" traditional power structures which may have at times frustrated efforts to bring about needed change would be highly destructive to the social fabric of the community. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on stimulating local initiatives which effectively build new traditions, melding the best that traditional rural individuals and organizations have to offer, the changing realities of rural social and economic life, and the positive aspirations of the new wave of urban in-migrants.

The whole area of child care service development is one example of how such a coalition could be built around a potentially devisive issue. To many rural child care service opponents, resistence to such programs represents a political action aimed at retaining the integrity of the family unit and maintaining traditional sex roles by discouraging women from working outside the home. Yet the

very same individuals are frequently those who decry the "welfare mother" phenomenon, arguing that all able-bodied individuals who need economic assistance should be expected to work...even if the lack of good, reasonably-priced child care makes it impossible for such women to work. Out of this apparent contradiction could come the basis of a rural community child care program. First, key members of the political power structure or influential voluntary or religious leaders need to become persuaded that it is in the overall community interest to develop such a program: to enable welfare recipients to realistically choose employment as a preferred option; to meet the need of many farm or other families in rural communities to have more than one wage earner due to high inflation costs if the family is to maintain its traditional position in the community; to meet the needs of key local companies to recruit and retain a more stable work force; to deal with the question of what to do in order to maintain traditional school facilities and community educational personnel in the face of a declining school population; to provide the pre-school options for interested parents who feel such experiences could enhance a child's ability to function well upon entering public school. If the comprehensive need for child care services and even the potential facilities and/or staff for such a program could be identified in this way, the number of individuals needed to successfully advocate for or put together the coalition to develop such a potentially controversial, "nontraditional" program is greatly enhanced.

There are models nationally for new community organizations which can successfully build such coalitions around key community issues or needs. During the 1970s, stimulated in part by a book by Willard Wirtz called The Boundless Resource, communities all around the United States--in rural areas of the West, South, mid-West, and Northeast, as well as in urban settings--have developed work-education councils: collaborative community networks which have tackled such diverse problems as youth school-to-work transition, adult mid-life work-transition problems, economic development and manpower issues, and career education. Central

to such organizations is the concept that action coalitions need to be formed in the context of a neutral political forum which enables community leaders and potential services clients to identify those key problems in which all have a degree of self-interest but where potential conflicts over methods arise. By systematically implementing and stimulating action around common goals and expanding on this base of common experience and trust for still further collaboration, communities learn to develop the mechanisms for successfully achieving goals unattainable given the previously fragmented power structure. Such rural programs have led to high levels of involvement on the part of the private sector in funding community-related career education programs otherwise unfundable with local educatonal resources, have made visible impacts on the quality and relevance of CETA training programs to the private sector and the community as a whole, and have led to the creation of economic development groups and unified development plans where previously local rural political bodies had fought unabashedly over funds and programs. (7.0)

While it is important to recognize the realities of the existing community leadership structure in any attempts to stimulate community building, it is also important to reassess the role of the private sector in relation to traditional community organizations. Unfortunately, in some rural communities, the modest influx of industry to capitalize on the labor force being freed up by the mechanization and consolidation of agriculture has not always been particularly beneficial to the community and its long-term support services and other needs. Management, with little regard for the traditional values of the community, has at times condoned quality of life endangering pollution and dumping policies which have taxed local infrastructures and waste disposal systems. Or emphasis may have been on narrow, short-range manpower training to meet immediate company needs, without thought for the long-term educational needs and/or potential of employees. By utilizing undertrained local labor and importing workers in higher skill or management positions, some companies have intentially or inadvertently contributed

to the stagnation rather than the long-term growth of the rural community in which they are operating. Similarly, short-sighted governmental leaders in rural communities have at times seen industries only in terms of immediate tax gain and not as key actors in the long-term development of a community. Thus, should an industry pull out of a given community, embittered by the lack of concern on the part of local government for business problems, or to move on to yet another small community in order to capitalize on cheaper labor or other short term potential gains, the former workers and the community as a whole is left to feel the crushing financial loss and the lack of mobility and breadth in the labor force's skills to meet the crisis.

Private sector and community interests need not and should not be at odds with one another. Many small communities are becoming more realistic in their aspirations, eschewing attempts to attract large-scale employers for a more manageable small-company growth pattern. Growing unionization efforts in southern and western rural areas are convincing some private sector employers that policies which are dependent on making maximum gain out of short-term cheap labor in a community are no longer as financially attractive. A stable, well-trained, loyal labor force in a rural community can be a great asset to the private sector; at the same time, the social, educational, and individual income benefits of a company to a community may often be even more important than any economic gain in the form of tax revenue.

In developing incentive programs to assist rural communities in attracting the kind of industrial and private sector growth appropriate to that individual community, Federal and state governments need to take into account that the relationship between individual companies and the community are often far more important in a rural setting than in an urban environment, where the lack of collaboration between an individual private sector employers and the public sector tends to be more obscured by the sheer numbers of companies involved. The whole role of community and companies vis-a-vis one another in the rural setting needs to be examined with greatest care and appropriate incentive mechanisms be developed with

the flexibility to meet local needs and conditions.

In terms of personal leadership styles in rural communities, federal and state agencies need to assume more sensitivity toward the changing status roles. At one point, the jack-of-all-trades independence of rural residents--particularly farmers--was singled out as a trait demanding highest respect by other members of the community. This tends to still be true in the area of community service leadership, where frequently rural men or women "wear many hats": small town merchant who, for example, at the same time might be member of the town council and school board, board member of the local economic development agency or manpower training consortium. In the economic sector, this kind of jack-of-all-trades individualist is becoming less common. The farmer of today frequently buys services--even foodstuffs for family consumption--because of the high time demands of cash crop production or because family members are commonly holding down additional jobs off the farms in order to keep going financially. Economic exigencies and expectations of new urban in-migrants are both changing the dynamics and values of traditional leadership elites, as well as local rural expectations regarding agency and outside assistance in general. Extension offices have begun, as result, to adjust both their leadership training and life skills programming accordingly in many communities to meet these changing needs and clientele. This kind of adaptation needs to be made as well by the whole gamut of Federal and state funded programs operating in the rural environment. (14.0)

In short, the key to rural capacity building lies in a Federal and state recognition of the desparate need for better rural communications mechanisms at a local, regional, and national level, as well as in the genuine attempt by agencies to help rural communities build new traditions to deal with their changing environments instead of attempting to scale down urban programs to fit rural demographics. More than any single factor, the "scale-down" mentality contributes to the large number of so-called rural programs which in reality are totally inappropriate to the needs and dynamics of rural life.

Overall Governmental and Private Sector Initiatives as a Nexus for Development in Rural Areas

The previous sections on health care, transportation and communication, housing, water, sewer, sanitary facility, and energy support services as well as strategy for rural capacity building attempt to pull together some of the most recent recommendations of Federal, state, and local experts regarding the major problems facing rural areas in the decade ahead, possible strategies for dealing with various issues, and the general priorities in each specific support service area. Particularly important are the summary concensus statements which were formulated in late summer and early fall, 1980 as part of a series of regional National Goals Conferences Linking Education and Economic Development in Rural America. (13.0) As a group, the major goals outlined at that conference fell into the three general priorities set by the Charter for Improved Rural Youth Transition, formulated as part of a groundbreaking policy conference on rural issues held in 1977--priorities which government at all levels needs to adress in helping rural communities realize their full potential:

1. Helping rural communities make maximum use of existing resources (financial, material, and human);
2. Helping rural areas truly gain equitable funding allocations for support services and other kinds of development;
3. Helping develop more flexible programming initiatives and allocations mechanisms which are genuinely responsive to individual community determinations of need.

Much can be done, if emphasis is placed on accountability and effectiveness, by policy makers at all levels in order to pursue these three goals. (5.0)

First, in order to help rural areas maximize utilization of existing resources, it is critical to develop some kind of effective, central Communications Center for rural America such as the Computer Information Brokering Center proposed as part of the "capacity building" process earlier in this chapter. This would seem the only realistic way for rural communities in any numbers to overcome their geographic isolation in accessing vital demographic, technical assistance, legislative, and programmatic information, as well as having input as a meaningful

coalition into the decision-making process at a national level. Many individual rural organizations would be in a position to provide invaluable research data into such a system (such as the National Rural Center, national 4-H organization, land grant colleges, the National Institute for Work and Learning, and the massive FmHA National Rural Community Facilities Assessment Study being conducted by Abt Associates which will include support service information on a sampling of 2,346 communities nationwide).* (1.0) As part of this capacity-building process, consideration also needs to be given to establishing set asides in various legislative programs to help communities with a variety of technical assistance needs--such as the possibility of establishing a system of rural "circuit riders" at the disposal of communities in need of specific kinds of technical assistance. Tax incentives and other types of incentives need to be considered as well that would encourage private sector employers around the United States to actively play a role in such a capacity building system.

Second, Federal, State and local rural policy development must take into account the universal pattern of discrimination and urban bias in much of the past governmental regulations and funding allocations. Given the higher costs and greater complexity associated with support services development in rural areas, such discrimination has only widened the gap between quality of life and economic growth potential of rural communities compared to urban areas. If government leaders cannot bring themselves to overcompensate in setting funding allocation levels to rural areas to make up for past injustices or to compensate realistically for the diseconomy of scale factor, at least it seems appropriate to finally set support service funding at minimum a a level proporationate to actual rural population. In the past, not even that policy was followed. A related problem is the need for government to recognize that the potential administrative burden is no justification for building minimum application cutoffs into grants targeted for rural areas. A $40,000 economic development program in a small community (or even less funds) can impact as much as a $400,000 project elsewhere and is as badly needed.

*Unfortunately, as of this writing,

Third, in developing strategies and initiatives to deal with the problem of inadequate support services in rural communities, stress needs to be placed on developing a flexible enough funding and program development system to accommodate the very diverse needs ot very different rural communities in different states and regions. For example, a recent Michigan public opinion survey conducted by the Agricultural Experiment Station of Michigan State University indicates that a majority or rual residents in that state see the following issues to be among the greatest problems facing their respective communities: employment, economic development (particularly industrial and retailing growth), energy costs and research, transportation (both road, rail, and transit systems), community planning and capacity building, housing, child care, and vocational education for youth. (10.0) In other areas of the country such as the Southwest and certain Plains areas, problems of water availability might be cited as the highest priority. Without strong sensitivity to the importance of local self-determination and the willingness to develop a broad range of programs to meet such a wide variety of rural needs, no Federal or State rural policy can hope to succeed. The concept of establishing a National Rural Advocates Office would be an important step toward monitoring programming with an eye for both rural equity and the kind of flexibility needed to meet a highly heterogenious set of rural needs.

Beyond the question of dollars allocated to the rural support service problem, government at all levels needs to explore the whole issue of other types of incentives--including those to the private sector--which could encourage better facility and service development locally. This includes factors such as reducing paperwork burdens associated with program development, finding possible tax incentives to help private industry recognize the dollars and cents value of taking the initiative in rural child care or even transportation development, and adjusting or waiving certain environmental regulations that place unrealistic responsibilities on farmers or small industries for major pollution control

expenditures or that do not take into account the infeasibility of certain systems developments in many rural communities because of the high costs and inqdequate tax bases involved. There is also the issue of energy research related to unique rural needs and what incentives to the private sector could stimulate the kind of alternative small-scale energy resource models that would be so critical in rural communities. A greater emphasis needs also to be placed on small business development in rural communities. Studies have repeatedly shown that this is where the job growth is most likely to come in rural aras, yet local funds for such small, "high risk rollers" and technical assistance to small businesses in general are in short supply.

In hearings before the Congressional Joint Economic Committee in 1977, the National Rural Caucus set out in great detail a series of long and short range priorities for policy and program development that could help eliminate some of the major barriers to support service development and community economic growth in rural America.' Many of these specific needs are contained in this chapter in the discussion of specific rural support service problem areas, but the document's list of problems still unmet and unheeded goes far beyond the confines of this general study. This CRC proposal should be considered "basic reading" for all Federal and State agencies concerned with rural issues. In addition, the CRC posits a number of basic overall recommendations for and indictments of Federal rural policy which must be addressed if meaningful change is ever to come:

--The whole definition of "rural" and "balanced national growth" needs to be reassessed.
--Emphasis needs to be placed on what "can be done" and not on what past administrations "have" or "have not done."
--Formal rural advocacy is needed to insure equitable access to funds, services, and programs by rural communities in existing legislation from the various cabinet departments. The executive branch of government does not have any kind of rural development advocate who can impact on policies in the internal executive branch offices such as Management and Budget or the Federal Reserve System. Without sufficient rural advocacy within OMB, Congress and the Executive Branch are being given unrealistic pictures of the financial need and resources of rural communities...particularly in the area of low interest credit policies.
--The lack of information about and lack of adequate technical capacity to respond in rural communities combine to keep rural areas from successfully

competing for existing legislative funds or programs which are already discriminatory in their very formulation.

--The needlessly verbose and complex language and content of the Federal Register effectively discriminate against isolated rural agencies and personnel who are attempting to comply with specifc regulations or compete for funds and who are not in a position to access appropriate bureaucrats for comprehensible "translations."

--Congress has continuously "too conservative in its response to the needs of rural communities." The Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act, in particular, has created tremendous fiscal difficulties for rural communities and agencies. Failure since 1972 to fully implement the Rural Development Act must be laid at the feet of Congress and the Executive Branch.

--Leadership within USDA, particularly the Farmers Home Administration, has suffered from inadequate vision, inadequate staffing, and inadequate dollars allocated to develop programs. Congress has contributed to FmHA's problems by "dumping" programs on the agency without adequate staffing to handle the increased responsibilities.

--Neither the House Subcommittee on Family Farms, Rural Development, and Special Studies or the Senate Subcommittee on Rural Development have adequate staffing or funds to handle the wide range of responsibilities assigned to them. (26.1)

Rural White House Initiative and Policy Statements beginning in late 1978 were a badly needed first attempt to meet CRC calls for a genuine rural development policy. In light of proposed budget tightening at all levels, it is critical that the problems of rural needs and the long history of rural underfunding and inequities are not forgotten or ignored. Federal and State governments must be willing to get their executive and legislative collaborative mechanisms in order as they impact on rural issues in order to insure that rural Americans do not, once again, find that the governmental system does not only discriminate against them in dollars and cents, but in the very programmatic development processes and concepts needed to make any kind of effective changes in the quality and quantity of economic support services in rural communities. Without this across-the-board emphasis on rural development problems, little if any meaningful job development or economic growth can or will realistically take place in rural America.

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- 21.3 John B. Breckenridge, Representative from Kentucky, pp. 51-62.
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